

Final

Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc.

Archaeological Testing of Grave Sites
at the Upper Corners Cemetary
Raystown Lake Recreation Area

Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

prepared for:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District

February 2000

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING OF GRAVE SITES
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RAYSTOWN LAKE RECREATION AREA,
HUNTINGDON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

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Prepared for:

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District
Planning Division
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ABSTRACT

The Upper Corners Cemetery is located on the Upper Corners Peninsula at Raystown Lake in Penn Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. As part of the Raystown Lake project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (Baltimore District) identified 13 cemeteries in 1968 that were either below the projected static pool elevation of 815 feet, or would be made inaccessible by road relocation associated with the project. The 13 cemeteries, including the Upper Corners Cemetery, were relocated between July and October, 1971. Baltimore District records, and a sworn affidavit from the mortuary contractor, indicate that 27-28 graves were disinterred from the Upper Corners Cemetery in 1971. Raystown Lake was subsequently impounded only to a level of 786 feet, so that the Upper Corners Cemetery remained above the waters of Raystown Lake.

From 1995 to 1998, as part of the Recreation Partnership Initiative (RPI), the Baltimore District, Planning Division conducted a variety of environmental and cultural investigations for potential development of the Upper Corners Peninsula. The proposed RPI development would impact the location of the former Upper Corners Cemetery. In 1998, the location of the Upper Corners Cemetery was subjected to archaeological investigation, to confirm that all of the interments in the cemetery, including unmarked interments, had been exhumed and relocated in 1971. Based on historical information, it was believed that 27-28 graves had been located and removed from the Upper Corners Cemetery. The archaeological investigation was undertaken because the excavation and removal of interments from the Upper Corners Cemetery in 1971 probably focused only on graves with headstones or markers and might have missed graves that did not have a headstone or marker.

The results of the archaeological examination revealed seven, or possibly eight, grave shafts at the cemetery that were not identified in 1971. Therefore, there are from 34 (27 original and 7 new) to 36 (28 original and 8 new) total graves at the cemetery. One of these newly found graves was inspected, and it contained a complete burial. It is likely that all of these newly discovered graves contain complete burials. In addition, the examination revealed that some of the graves recorded as having been removed were not, and others were only partially removed. Of the five supposedly relocated graves that were examined, three still contained complete human skeletal remains and two contained partial human skeletal remains.

It is uncertain whether the remaining 28 to 30 graves at the Upper Corners Cemetery contain complete, partial, or no human skeletal remains.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the investigation reported herein is to assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (Baltimore District) in the archaeological investigation of the Upper Corners Cemetery to determine the presence or absence of intact burials that were missed during the 1971 relocation of the cemetery. Based on historical information, it was believed that 27-28 graves had been located and removed from the Upper Corners Cemetery. The archaeological investigation was undertaken because the excavation and removal of interments from the Upper Corners Cemetery in 1971 probably focused only on graves with headstones or markers. In rural areas during the turn of the 19th/20th century, not every burial received a marker or headstone. This was particularly true for young children and infants. Therefore, it was thought that some of the graves at the Upper Corners Cemetery may not have had a headstone or marker and were consequently overlooked during the relocation.

The purpose of this investigation was to excavate a sample of visible grave shafts for the purpose of determining whether burials remained in the shafts. This report describes the findings of the investigation.

1.2 Project Description

The project area is within the Raystown Lake Recreation Area in Penn Township, Huntingdon County, in the south central portion of the state of Pennsylvania. The project area is located within the Upper Juniata River Basin (Figure 1). Raystown Lake was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1973, which impounded part of the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River with an earth-filled dam to create an 8,300 acre recreational pool.

Raystown Lake was one of 25 properties out of 400 Corps properties identified in a 1992 study initiated by the Department of the Army to provide recommendations for new uses for its properties. This overall project was termed the Recreation Partnership Initiative (RPI). The proposed actions consist of construction of a hotel/conference center complex, golf course, road network, and associated utility facilities and lines on over 1,000 acres on the Upper Corners Peninsula at Raystown Lake.

Prior to the initiation of this project, the Corps determined that the Raystown Lake RPI project would impact the location of the former Upper Corners Cemetery. The Upper Corners Cemetery was one of 13 cemeteries relocated in 1971, prior to the construction of Raystown

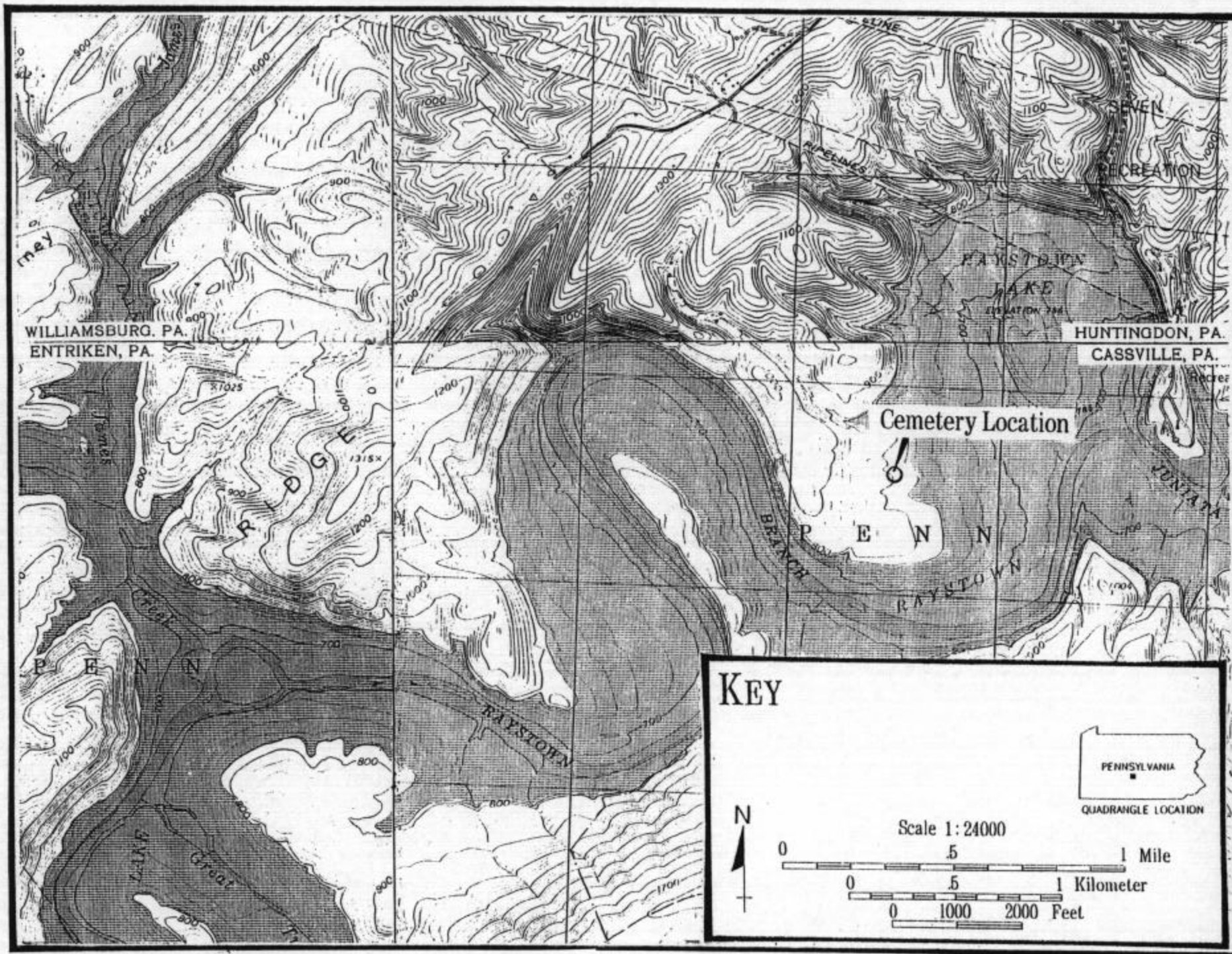


Figure 1 Vicinity of the Project Area Showing Site Location

Lake. The site is situated on the southwest side of the intersection of Township Roads 404 and 416, approximately 20 m west of the current shore of Raystown Lake (Figure 1). The former Upper Corners Cemetery location encompasses an area of 122 feet by 62 feet. Before the lake was built, it would have been near the edge of a high terrace, overlooking the floodplain of the Raystown Branch. At the time of the field investigation, the vicinity around the site was covered with secondary growth, ranging from small shrubs to trees approximately 15-20 cm in diameter. The terrain sloped slightly down to the east. Soils in the vicinity are mapped as Raritan silt loam, 2:10% slopes (USDA 1978, Sheet 39). The Raritan series consists of deep, moderately well drained soils formed on Pleistocene-age terraces (USDA 1978:43).

Fieldwork was completed from November 20 to December 3, 1998, with Ms. Pamela J. Richardson (MA, A&HC's Laboratory Director) serving as Field Director. The crew consisted, at various times, of Dr. Conran A. Hay, Dr. David J. Rue, Mr. Gary Coppock, and Mr. William Small.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

2.1 Background

The Upper Corners Church was a branch of the German Baptist Brethren Church (Dunkers) at James Creek. The church for members living on the Raystown Branch was built in 1873. It was known as the “Bethel House” or “Comer” (Home Mission Board 1924: 110). The church was a small frame structure, measuring 30’ x 36’ (9.1 x 11 m), made of timbers cut and planed by the church members (Kaylor 1981:96). It was situated on land owned at the time by John Brumbaugh, on the dividing line between the upper and lower Corner farmsteads worked by two of his sons, Benjamin and Henry. The lot was not deeded to the church, but was maintained by the Brumbaughs and later owners of the farm.

The church was situated towards the front of a small lot, with a graveyard behind it where church members were buried. Although the Brumbaughs helped initiate the construction of this branch church and owned the land where it was built, they also continued to worship on a regular basis in the James Creek church and at other churches in the area. Those belonging to several member families were interred in the cemetery associated with the Upper Corners Church, but members of the Brumbaugh family continued to be interred in the family cemetery at “Timothy Meadows,” the old family homestead. The newly built church was shown on an 1873 map of Penn Township as a German Baptist Church bordering the west side of the road, with a school adjacent to it on the southeast (Pomeroy 1873). However, cemeteries were not marked separately on this map and the cemetery at Upper Corners may not have been created at that time.

The prospects of the Upper Corners Church looked promising when it was first built in 1873, but fifty years later the congregation had shrunk to a few members (Home Mission Board 1924: 110). Among the previously identified graves in the cemetery, the oldest were two graves dating to 1878 and the most recent was a grave dating to 1914, indicating that the cemetery was used for interments during this period. The congregation may have continued until 1948, at which time the church building was removed and some of its furnishings were sold off (Kaylor 1981:97). After 1948, the cemetery continued to be maintained by descendants of those buried there, and the lot was under the care of the adjacent property owners (COE 1968).

In 1968, the Baltimore District published a Cemetery Relocation Plan (Design Memorandum #10) as part of the General Design Memorandum for the Raystown Lake project (COE 1968). The Cemetery Relocation Plan identified 13 cemeteries that were either below the

815 foot elevation (the projected static pool elevation at that time), or would be made inaccessible by road relocation associated with the project. As part of the Raystown Lake project, the 13 cemeteries, including the Upper Corners Cemetery, were acquired by the Baltimore District through condemnation proceedings and relocated between July and October, 1971. The Upper Corners Cemetery was relocated due to its position below the 815 foot contour. Design Memorandum #10 records 27 burials at the Upper Corners Cemetery (COE 1968; Figure 2, Table 1), but a sworn affidavit from the mortuary contractor who performed the disinterment notes that 28 burials were removed in 1971. The location of this 28th grave was not recorded.

The lake was subsequently impounded only to a level of 786 feet, so that some of the cemeteries which were relocated remained above the current pool levels. The Upper Corners Cemetery remained above the waters of Raystown Lake. This property was designated as Tract 1605C. Since the 1971 excavation and removal of interments from the Upper Corners Cemetery may have focused only on graves with headstones or other markers, an investigation of the cemetery was recommended, to determine whether unmarked graves occurred within the cemetery.

2.2 Previous Investigations

The first step in the investigation of the Upper Corners Cemetery was the mechanical stripping and hand clearing of topsoil from the cemetery, to expose the subsoil. The grave shafts appeared as dark, rectangular stains in the lighter subsoil. When these stains were compared to maps of the cemetery from the 1968 Design Memorandum #10, it was found that seven graves observed in the field did not correspond to previously recorded grave locations on the map, indicating that unmarked graves were present in the cemetery. These “new” graves were labeled U(unmapped)1 to U7 (Figure 2). One of these new graves (Grave U2) is somewhat wider than other graves and may actually be two side-by-side interments. Therefore, the actual number of new graves identified may be eight.

The locations of Graves 17-20 (Figure 2) were difficult to identify, because soils in this portion of the cemetery had been heavily disturbed. These four grave shafts were characterized by irregular, poorly defined boundaries and a less compact fill with many small rootlets and a distinctive odor of decomposition that is often associated with cemeteries. In contrast, the unmarked graves and the rest of the previously recorded graves were characterized by clearly defined grave shaft stains with straight sides, right-angled corners, and a reddish, compact, odor-free fill. The similarity in characteristics between the unmarked grave shafts and the majority of the previously recorded grave shafts suggested that the latter, like the former, had not been disturbed or disinterred in the recent past. The presence of intact mortared stone pedestals

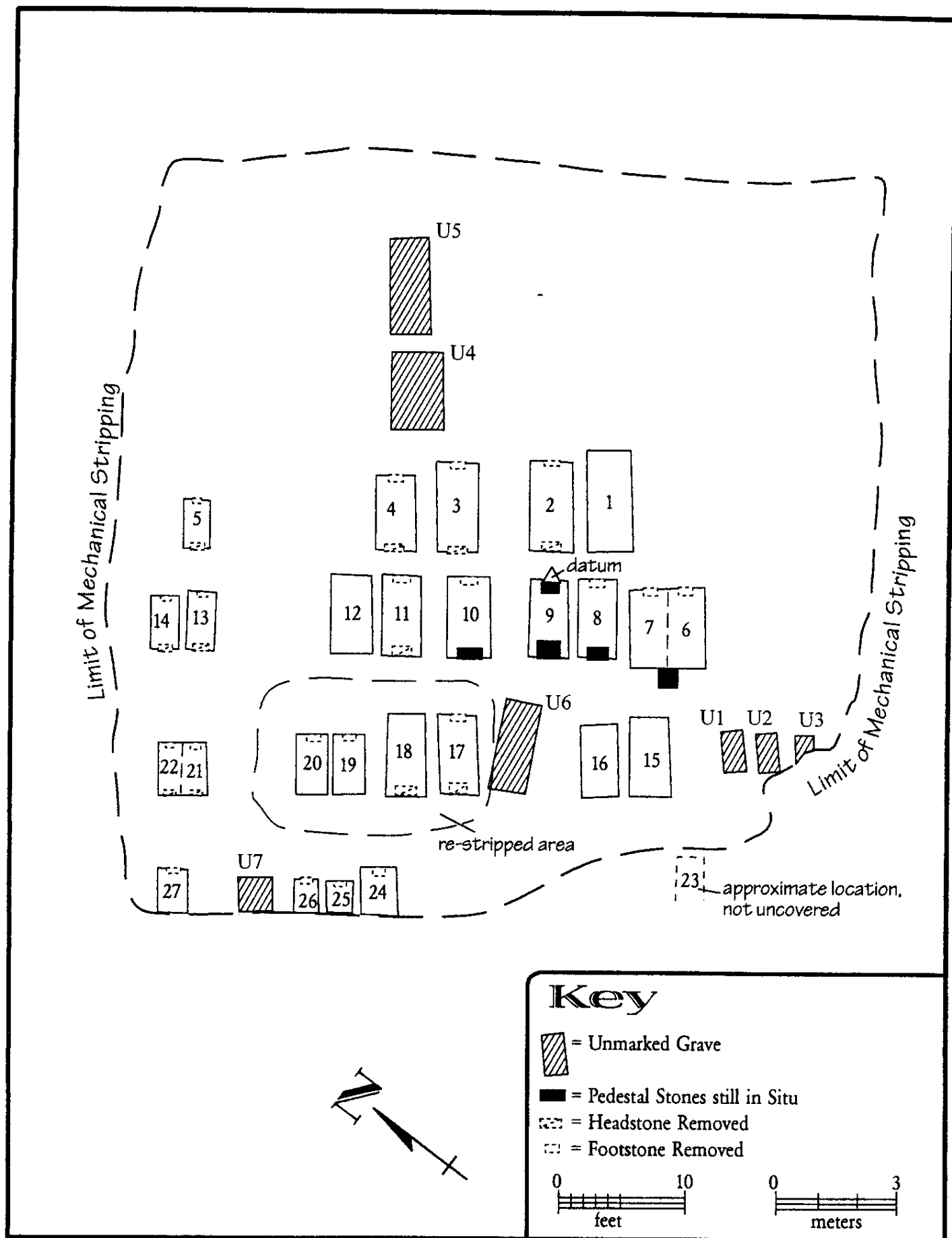


Figure 2 Map of Cemetery Area, Showing Grave Shafts Noted in Mechanical Stripping

Table 1
Interments in Upper Corners Cemetery

Grave	Deceased	Birth Date	Death Date	Reinterment
1	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
2	Ellen Showalter	1826	1904	Old Stone Church
3	Isaac Showalter	1836	1914	Old Stone Church
4	Sophia Showalter	1836	1888	Old Stone Church
5	Ethel G. Showalter	1903	1903	Old Stone Church
6	Alexandra McCall	1840	1906	Old Stone Church
7	Ellen McCall	1844	1902	Old Stone Church
8	Esaac Norris	1819	1898	Old Stone Church
9	Mary Norris	1823	1901	Old Stone Church
10	Thomas Norris	1815	1899	Old Stone Church
11	Nancy Norris	1824	1892	Old Stone Church
12	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
13	Maggie Norris	1882	1887	Union Cemetery
14	Lula M. Norris	1891	1891	Union Cemetery
15	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
16	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
17	John A. Showalter	1832	1892	Old Stone Church
18	Susan A. Showalter	ND	ND	Old Stone Church
19	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
20	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
21	John J. Showalter	1873	1878	Old Stone Church
22	Abram Showalter	1874	1878	Old Stone Church
23	Norris (daughter)	1891	1891	Old Stone Church
24	Mary Ellen Fisher	1884	1889	White Church
25	McCall (son)	1898	1898	Union Cemetery
26	Unknown	?	?	Old Stone Church
27	Cyrus G. Garner	1879	1880	Old Stone Church

Source: COE, 1968.

covering parts of the grave shafts of three previously recorded graves (Graves 8, 9, and 10) further suggested that these three, and by association also the other compact, clearly delineated graves, had not been disinterred.

The contrast between the four heavily disturbed grave shafts on the one hand and the unmarked graves and other previously recorded graves on the other hand, raised the possibility that only those four graves may have been disinterred and removed when the cemetery was relocated in 1971. For the other graves, it was thought possible that only the head stones or other markers were removed, without exhuming the individuals buried in those graves. Additional investigations, including the excavation of a sample of the graves, was thought necessary.

3.0 FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 Field Methodology

The portion of the investigation of the cemetery described in this report consisted of the archaeological excavation of a sample of the graves. A total of six graves were excavated, including one of the newly found graves (Grave U6), one of the supposedly removed graves that looked on initial inspection like it actually had been removed (Grave 17), and four graves that were supposedly removed but looked on initial inspection like they may not have been (Graves 4, 9, 15, and 21).

The grave shafts were excavated by hand with extreme attention paid to any evidence, or lack of evidence, of previous disinterment. Approximately 30 cm of upper soils had been stripped away in the previous phase of work. It was estimated that the upper part of burial remains would occur at approximately 130 cm below original ground surface. Therefore, soils were removed throughout the grave shaft with a shovel to a depth of approximately 100 cm below current ground surface. At that point, the half of the grave at the foot of the shaft was left as a pedestal to stand on while working, and careful shoveling and/or troweling commenced in the approximate 1 m x 1 m area at the head end of the grave. These soils were screened through 1/4" mesh and notes were taken on what was observed and recovered. Fragments of coffins and trace fragments of skeletal materials were placed in bags. Excavation was discontinued when it became clear whether burial remains were present or absent, and whether they represented intact burials or partial fragments left behind.

3.2 Field Results

Grave 9

Grave 9 was supposedly removed in 1971, but on initial inspection looked like it had not been removed. Design Memorandum #10 (COE 1968) listed this as the grave of Mary Norris, deceased 1901 and reinterred at Old Stone Church. The approximate 1 m x 2 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 100 cm by hand-shoveling, and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal. The headstone base was still present at the southwestern end, and this was removed after excavation around it had undercut its position. Below 100 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the grave and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. Wood and cloth fragments from the coffin were identified, and evidence of burial remains was noted. Such evidence included human skull bone fragments, ornamental hair combs, coffin wood, silver plated

coffin handles, cloth, and buttons. The human bones were fragmented and out of anatomical position, and it was concluded that the majority of this burial had been removed previously.

Grave 17

Grave 17 was supposedly removed in 1971, and on initial inspection this grave looked like it had been removed. Design Memorandum #10 (COE 1968) listed this as the grave of John A. Showalter, deceased 1892 and reinterred at Old Stone Church. It was located in a slightly depressed area with soggy soil conditions. The approximate 1 m x 2 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 117 cm by hand-shoveling, and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal.

Below 117 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the shaft and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. Cut nails, spikes, wood, and coffin handle parts were noted. A plate glass viewing window was revealed, broken but in-place (Plate 2). This window would originally have been located on the lid of the coffin, to allow observation of the deceased during the funeral service. Excavation beneath the glass fragments revealed a complete burial (Plate 3). This skeleton was in a poor state of preservation, but was clearly a complete, adult human burial. At this point, excavation was terminated and the unit partially filled in.

Grave U6

Grave U6 was unknown previous to the initial removal of the topsoil from the cemetery. Near the surface in the northeastern corner of the grave, a crudely cut or naturally tablet-shaped stone was found sticking up vertically, carved crudely with the initials HJK (Plate 4). The top of this stone protruded slightly above the current ground surface. However, over a foot of soil had already been removed from this area, so the stone would not have been visible during the relocation in 1971. The approximate 1 m x 2 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 114 cm by hand-shoveling and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal.

Below 114 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the shaft and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. Two wire nails, two screws, a coffin handle bracket, and coffin wood fragments were recovered, and below these was a poorly preserved but complete skeleton (Plate 5). The skull, teeth, vertebrae, and collarbone were in place, as was as a coffin handle near the head. A variety of coffin hardware and coffin wood fragments were also discovered.



Plate 1: Base of Grave 9



Plate 2: Glass Viewing Window in Grave 17



Plate 3: Intact Burial in Grave 17



Plate 4: Marker Stone in Northeastern Corner of Grave U6



Plate 5: Intact Burial in Grave U6



Plate 6: Intact Burial in Grave 15

Grave 15

Grave 15 was supposedly removed in 1971, but on initial inspection looked like it had not been removed. Design Memorandum #10 (COE 1968) listed this as the grave of an unknown individual reinterred at Old Stone Church. The approximate 1 m x 2 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 100 cm by hand-shoveling and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal.

Below 100 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the shaft and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. Nails, screws, and coffin hardware were found, as was a complete, relatively well-preserved burial (Plate 6) under a fragmented viewing glass plate with red pigment. There was a metal plate over the pelvic region embossed with the word "Mother." This plate would have been affixed to the lid of the coffin. Various coffin hardware and wood fragments were also found.

Grave 4

Grave 4 was supposedly removed in 1971, but looked on initial inspection like it had not been removed. Design Memorandum #10 (COE 1968) listed this as the grave of Sophia Showalter, deceased 1888 and reinterred at Old Stone Church. The approximate 1 m x 2 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 107 cm by hand-shoveling and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal.

Below 107 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the shaft and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. Nails, screws, and coffin wood fragments, and flat glass fragments were found. A fragmented glass viewing plate was identified, but this glass was no longer in place. The glass plate was cleared away, revealing that the burial had been removed (Plate 7). Bone fragments remained, as did a full set of porcelain dentures, but it was evident that the rest of the skeleton had been removed. Coffin hardware and a glass button were also noted.

Grave 21

Grave 21 was supposedly removed in 1971, but looked on initial inspection like it had not been removed. Design Memorandum #10 (COE 1968) listed this as the grave of John J. Showalter, deceased 1878 at age 5 and reinterred at Old Stone Church. The approximate 0.75 m x 1.25 m area of the shaft was removed to a depth of 100 cm by hand-shoveling, and the northeastern half was left as a pedestal.



Plate 7: Glass Viewing Plate Shards,
Base of Excavations in Grave 4

Below 100 cm, careful shoveling commenced in the southwestern half of the shaft and the soil was screened through 1/4" mesh. A bolt, coffin hardware, coffin wood fragments, and teeth were observed. The outline of a "shouldered" type coffin began to appear, and the outline of the intact lid was exposed at 110 cm (Plate 8). It was assumed that an intact burial remained within.



Plate 8: Base of Excavations,
Coffin Lid in Grave 21

4.1 Summary

Historical records and the results of the archaeological investigation indicate there are between 34 and 36 graves (or former graves) at the Upper Corners Cemetery. Six graves were inspected in the archaeological investigation, and four of these were found to contain human remains (Graves 15, 17, 21, and U6). Three of the graves still containing complete human remains (Graves 15, 17, and 21) were reported as having been relocated to another cemetery in 1971. The other grave (U6) was recently discovered, and was presumably overlooked in the 1971 relocation. The other two graves that were inspected (Graves 4 and 9) contain partial human skeletal remains. It is uncertain whether the remaining 28 to 30 graves at the Upper Corners Cemetery contain complete, partial, or no human skeletal remains.

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USDA

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APPENDIX 1

Artifact Inventory for Raystown Lake Cemetery

Burial	Level	Artifact Type	Count	Weigh
9	2	Wire Nail	4	
9	2	Unidentifiable Nail	5	
9	2	Bracket flat	2	
9	2	Figurine, limestone polyester	2.80	
9	2	Coffin wood cedar	13.84	
9	3	Cut Nail	1	
9	3	Wire Nail	17	
9	3	Unidentifiable Nail	9	
9	3	Washer silver plated	4	
9	3	Bracket	9	
9	3	Glass Button all 4 hole; all three different White Milk Glass	3	
9	3	Comb - material type? 2 tortoise shell, 1 black Cellulose Nitrate	3	
9	3	Figurine, limestone polyester	55.18	
9	3	Coffin wood	29	68.17
9	3	Bone Fragment human skull fragment	10	44.05
9	3	Latch from coffin	2	
9	3	Coffin Handle Bracket silver plated c.1892	5	
9	3	Coffin Handle End silver plated, Art Deco design c.1892	5	
17	2	Cut Nail	4	
17	2	Spike	2	
17	3	Cut Nail	4	
17	3	Unidentifiable Nail	7	
17	3	Screw	2	
17	3	Tractor Wrench	6	
17	3	Coffin wood	6	3.85
17	3	Beveled wood edging from coffin possibly held viewing plate in position	12	
17	3	Coffin Handle Bracket silver plated c.1892	2	
17	3	Coffin Handle End silver plated, Art Deco design c.1892	2	
17	4	Unidentified Glass -Flat (bubbles/patina) viewing plate Colorless	60	
17	4	Unidentified Copper	1	
U6	2	Wire Nail	2	
U6	2	Screw one w/ metal top- looks like a key	2	
U6	2	Bracket v-shape	1	
U6	2	Coffin wood cedar	18	70.68
U6	2	Latch from coffin	1	
U6	3	Wire Nail	16	
U6	3	Unidentifiable Nail	28	
U6	3	Screw just metal top of the screw	1	
U6	3	Bracket v-shaped	6	
U6	3	Cloth	42	
U6	3	Coffin wood	38	62.35

U6	3	Bone Fragment	human		2 .67
U6	3	Teeth	human		4 2.31
U6	3	Latch from coffin			1
U6	3	Coffin Handle	plain, silver plated, metal handle bar	c.1880-1900	1
15	2	Screw	with metal top-looks like a key		1
15	3	Unidentifiable Nail			4
15	3	Screw	with metal top-looks like a key		3
15	3	Bracket	2 silver plated, highly embossed		5
15	3	Unidentified Copper			1
15	3	Coffin wood	some w/ paint remnants		22 17.97
17		Coffin wood			1 .81
17		Bone Fragment	human		5 2.23
17		Teeth	human		1 1.47
4	2	Unidentified Glass	-Flat (bubbles/patina)	viewing plate Colorless	12
4	2	Unidentifiable Nail			6
4	2	Unidentified Copper			1
4	2	Coffin wood			6 27.55
4	3	Unidentified Glass	-Flat (bubbles/patina)	viewing plate Colorless	87
4	3	Unidentifiable Nail			8
4	3	Screw	with metal top-looks like a key, with brackets		2
4	3	Unidentified Copper		White Milk Glass	2
4	3	Glass Button	2 are 4 holes, 1 is 2 hole, different designs		3
4	3	Coffin wood			6 28.79
4	3	Porcelain dentures	1 complete upper, bottom in pieces		3
21	2	Bolt	with coffin wood		1
21	2	Coffin wood	with remnants of paint; white ?		7 21.19
21	2	Teeth	human		5 1.41
21	2	Coffin Hinge	Flor-de-Lis shape-3 nail/screw holes	c.1878	4